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**Rev. James D. Craig**

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**What is it and How to Receive it?**

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**Rev. James D. Craig**

We're going to be talking about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Now I'm going to do this perhaps a little differently than you might expect in the sense that when I began to teach, and I had mentioned to you the Lord spoke to me about writing the Lifestream book and then about going out and teaching it in churches, I said to myself, now wait a minute, Lord. I'm a teacher. I am not what is classified as a Holy Spirit evangelist. I don't have a white suit. I don't have any white shoes. I'm not a flashy kind of a person. I'm not a demonstrative kind of person most of the time. We have this caricature in our minds, you know, of what an evangelist is and a person that God would use to bring others into the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

As I went all I could do was do what God had sort of wired me to do, and that's to teach. So as I began to teach I was just totally amazed at what happened because I would do my thing which would be, rather than to exhort which many have a tremendous ministry of exhortation and building us up and encouraging us with stories about what God is doing and so forth, my ministry is just to take the Bible and explain and bring understanding. That is what I'm called to do. As I did that about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I was absolutely amazed because do you know what happened? People got filled with the Spirit. I couldn't believe it. I didn't think it would happen in a teacher's ministry that this would occur. Instead of spending all my time in exhortation and encouraging and building people up and getting them excited and ready to receive, I would just explain and teach and put forth sound doctrine sometimes for three meetings in a row. Then we would pray and we would come to the front and there would be thirty people and twenty-five or thirty of them would get filled with the Holy Spirit. I was the most surprised guy on the block when that happened because I didn't think that would happen when you just teach the word. We get preconceived ideas of how these things are supposed to be done.

So I'm here today and I'm here this week just to do what God has called to do and that's to teach the word. This morning we're going to talk about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Tomorrow we're going to talk about the initial evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and try to deal with all the issues surrounding that, or a number of

the issues. Finally, on Friday, we're going to talk about how to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit and we're going to pray for that to happen. Okay. So we're not going to pray this morning after the service for the baptism. You say, oh, well shouldn't we be able to get it any moment right away? Well, theoretically that is true. But don't forget the Day of Pentecost happened after a ten-day prayer meeting. There was some spiritual preparation involved. And we also live in an instant society where we want instant everything and sometimes we want instant experiences with God. But there may be preparation of the heart that is involved. The Bible talks about – I mentioned on Sunday morning the Lord pouring out his spirit on this hungry and dry and thirsty land. We don't get thirsty in five minutes. It takes a little time to get thirsty, for you to be in need of some liquid.

So we're going to teach this morning on what the baptism is, tomorrow on the issue of initial evidence, what happens, why we believe speaking in other tongues is important to this experience with God, and then on the steps, what is involved in my own life to receive and praying to that end on Friday morning.

Let's begin then. The baptism of the Spirit. I mentioned on Sunday morning John the Baptist was sent by God to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ, announcing that God's kingdom was coming and that people needed to prepare themselves for the coming of the King. So he baptized people in water as proof that they had repented. But he also placed tremendous emphasis upon the fact that another baptism was going to take place and he pointed not so much to the baptism itself but to the baptizer. He said this: *As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.* This is that unique promise that Luke 24:49 calls the promise of my Father, Jesus called it, that was coming, the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the enduement of power for which they were to wait in the City of Jerusalem as Acts, chapter 1, describes for us.

If you turn with me to Acts, chapter 1, you will see that Jesus once again refers to this and of course the book of Acts was written by Luke, as was Luke's gospel. Luke kind of ties the two narratives together quite nicely and overlaps them a little bit. It says

in verse 4, this is after forty days of Jesus proving himself to be alive and presenting himself to various ones, and then in verse 4: *And gathering them together, [this is the eleven] He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; [so they already knew what he was talking about] for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. " And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "No, not yet. That is up to the Father."*

When they are all excited, they have it all worked out, okay, Jesus has died. They didn't expect that. He was resurrected. They really didn't expect that and their hope has been restored and their faith has been restored and God is doing incredible things and any minute now of course he will appear in the clouds of the heavens and appoint them as rulers over the tribes of Israel. So they were kind of excited about that and looking forward to that. They wanted to know when this was going to happen.

Essentially Jesus says that it's none of your business. It's up to the Father. He has decided. He's got it all figured out. You can't figure it out so don't worry about it. That should tell you how much time you should invest in trying to figure out Bible prophecy. It's good to know what prophecy is telling us. Do you know what prophecy is for? Prophecy is for the purpose that when it is fulfilled we can look back and say, wow, that was the plan of God. Because if you look at all the details you can't figure it out ahead of time. Even the rulers of Israel couldn't believe that the Messiah was going to be born in Bethlehem because he was and they didn't even get that straight. They got, well, you're from Nazareth. Isn't it amazing that nobody said, excuse me, where were you born? They never asked Jesus that question. Who would have thought that the verse "out of Egypt I have called my Son" applied to Jesus? Only the Holy Spirit knew that applied to Jesus. There is no way you could have figured that out by any method of Bible interpretation you want to apply. So prophecy sketches out for us the general sense of what God is doing but the purpose of prophecy always is to call us to a holy walk with God and a spirit of expectation, that is, to motivate us toward how we live our lives, not how we spend all our time looking at our newspaper and our Bible. Because

God is going to do it in the way God is going to do it and he may do it in five minutes or he may do it in fifty years. Oh, it couldn't be fifty years. There are people thirty, forty years ago who thought it couldn't be any more than two years until Jesus came because it has been thirty or forty years and God has his time figured out and he's got it all worked out. The danger, of course, is we have these wonderful ones who get a little more specific perhaps than they should dare and they are embarrassed twenty years later when their books are proved all wrong. We don't know how God is going to work that out. It's good to study. It's good to try and understand as much as we can about what God is saying. But Jesus says here there is something more important than figuring the details of when the kingdom is going to start and this is what it is. You're going to get power and it's going to come upon you when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Verse 8. And as a result of that you will be my eyewitnesses starting in Jerusalem and then next door in Judea and Samaria, and then even to the ends of the earth. So he drew their focus, their emphasis, their attention onto something else, not even on his second return so much but on the empowering he promised to fulfill the commission that he gave them.

So the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is very clear. It is stated for us here. It is obvious from any fair interpretation of scripture that what Jesus is talking about in verse 5 is what he is talking about in verse 8. In verse 5: *"...but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."* Acts 1:8. *"...but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;"* so wait for it in Jerusalem. And I don't know anybody of any persuasion that would try and argue that he's not essentially referring to the same reality in verse 5 and verse 8. So when he's saying that you're soon going to be baptized with the spirit, clothed with power, endued with the spirit so you can be my witnesses. This is the purpose why they were to wait. Because you see Jesus had given them a commission. He had given them an awesome task in an age with no mass communication whatsoever. He said all you have to do is tell everybody about me in the entire world. These guys didn't even have an accurate map of what the world constituted at that time. They had no idea of what the true population of the world or all the places where they lived. Still Jesus gave them this incredible commission and he promised them the power to carry it out. And in a sense he warned

them and held them back. It's like he said, 'guys, go for it but not yet because you're missing something. There is something you need that will tremendously help you and make you capable of fulfilling this impossible task I have given to you.'

I mentioned in my message on Sunday morning for those of you who were not here that this empowering that the Spirit gives is an empowering not only to speak for Jesus, but it is an empowering that enables us to demonstrate that Jesus is alive and well. It is a demonstration of the resurrection. So when you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, when you are empowered with the Holy Spirit, along with that comes all of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including signs and wonders and miracles which testify to the fact that Jesus Christ is not in his tomb like all the other great religious leaders in whose name no miracles will happen unless the enemy throws something in there. But in the name of Jesus different things happen because he's alive and well and he's alive from the dead.

So the empowering of the Holy Spirit comes so that we can demonstrate with signs and wonders and miracles in order to preach the gospel. In Hebrews, chapter 2, let's turn quickly over to Hebrews 2. I want to allude to this other reference to this concept. Someone has said quite simply that signs and wonders and miracles are God's advertising. They are God's way of getting people's attention. It's not what their faith should be based upon, but it is something that will arrest their attention and cause them to realize that they are dealing with a true, living and mighty God who loves them and wants to work in their lives.

Hebrews 2:2-4 says this. *For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.*

So you see here this pattern that Jesus spoke the word and of course demonstrated with miracles, and those who heard him, the apostolic generation, also demonstrated the message that they preached in the same way Jesus did. As the

Father has sent me, Jesus said, so send I you, with the same commission, the same empowerment and the same job to do in the same way; preach the gospel, heal the sick, raise the dead and to let people know that God's kingdom has arrived and they can be part of it.

So this little reference in Hebrews is quite interesting, written quite a bit after the book of Acts probably and referring to a time after that, but still people were believing because God had been confirming his word with signs following. So the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes to enable us, to empower us to bear witness to Christ, not only through opening our mouths to boldly proclaim the love of God and the mercy of God available through Jesus, but also to demonstrate that he is alive and well and that things happen in his name that happen in no other name. As a result of that people can be convinced there is no other name given under heaven among men by which we must be saved than the name of Jesus Christ.

Well, let's look for a second then at terminology and try and sort out some of the things that can be sources of confusion about the baptism of the Holy Spirit in scripture. The Bible uses a number of terms more or less synonymously in the same way to refer to this experience. It is called, as we saw in Acts 1:5, a baptism. But it is also called in Acts 2:38 a gift. So a baptism. A gift. It is called a filling of the Holy Spirit. You see it is quite obvious -- no one would disagree -- what Jesus promised in Acts 1:8 was fulfilled in Acts 2. In Acts 1:8 and 1:5 it is a baptism. When it happens in Acts 2 the word *baptism* is never used. It is called a filling with the Spirit. Hence, I think it is fair to say there is a lot of similarity between the two and we won't try to draw a really right distinction, but baptism-filling, there is a connection between these. In Acts 8:17 it is called a receiving of the Spirit and also in Acts 19:6 it speaks of the Holy Spirit coming upon people. So we have these different terms: baptism, gift, filling, receiving, coming upon people, that all would seem in their context to refer to the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Now you say to yourself why didn't God use the same word for the same thing? You know what? That desire to use precisely the same word technically, theologically when we're talking about only the same thing is a desire born in us as a result of what is

called the enlightenment that changed the way our culture looked at the world, starting about two hundred fifty years ago and brought in the scientific era and a certain way of looking at the world that requires consistent use of terminology. So when you're going to write a theology textbook today you start off by stating your position and you start off by defining your terms. When I use the term *church* this is what I'm going to refer to because of many different definitions that have attached to that word, and so forth. So our culture has taught us to speak with a kind of verbal precision. You know what? In Luke's day they didn't care about that stuff. They didn't think that way. When you look at the gospels and you say okay, these are stories about the life of Jesus, how come we don't know hardly anything about him growing up? How come they don't seem to be in chronological order? No matter how hard the theologians and New Testament scholars have tried to, it is very hard to put a tight chronological sequence on those four accounts. Why?—because they didn't care about that stuff. Today when you write a biography you start when a person was born and you talk about their development as a young person and you talk about their psychological development and the influences that formed their thinking and made them become president, or whoever it is you're writing about. We have all of these conventions about how a biography should be written. You go through their life and the major points and at the end of their life they die and you sum up the significance. And that's it.

Well, in the first Century that's not how they saw biography. In the first Century a biography was a series of Polaroid snapshots and you took pictures of your subject at times when they were behaving most like they really were, and then you stitched these little pictures together however you felt was appropriate and that was the biography. You can read other biographies from the first Century that are similar in one sense to the gospels in the way they present their information. We look at that and say it doesn't read like a biography to me because there is no chronological sequence. Chronological sequence didn't matter to those folks. You can go to different parts of the world today and the same thing is true. You go to Africa and do you know what they call this, they call this the god on the wrist. Guess why? Because we follow it religiously, don't we. We live by it. You've heard the expression African time, there is the expression Island time, Latin American time, which is one or two hours after whatever time the meeting



was supposed to start people will feel free to show up. We laugh at that because we have been taught that life has to work in a tight precise schedule controlled by a chronometer. Our society has a lot of conventions in it that are there because we think like machines, because we have invented bigger and better machines than anybody in history throughout the Industrial Revolution.

So when we look at the book of Acts don't get upset about the fact that God uses several different expressions for essentially the same thing because that's how people talked about things. And that's good because in one sense it's sort of like having a mystery gift in the garage. You know, your son turns eighteen and you're able to bless him with a vehicle and so you put it in the garage and you say now I've got a present for you and it's in that little building at the back of the house there. But you've got to guess what it is before you can have it. There's windows on all four sides. So he goes out to the back and he looks around and he sees what looks like a bumper back there. Oh, hey, praise God, that looks like a car. I hope it's not a Plymouth or something. He goes to the other side and he looks and he sees that it's a two-door. That's okay. He goes around the front and he gets another angle on it. And as he adds up all the information he gets from these different windows he starts to form a picture in his mind that, you know, it's a Porsche, no problem. Dad has just dropped sixty grand on a car for him. Right? He's kind of excited. Then they open the door and find out it's a Volkswagen. Anyway, all of these different pictures are from different angles.

But these expressions are like that. They are little windows on a reality from different angles and from different facets that give a fuller picture of what this experience is all about. God uses a variety of terms to give us a fuller picture. It's just like the church. The church is described as a plant, as a building, as a temple, all sorts of things. It's a bride. How many brides do you know that look like buildings? Don't answer that. But the thing is they are different pictures that point to the same reality and tell us different things about that reality. The fact that it is a bride means that it is beloved by someone. That's wonderful. The fact that it's a building means it is all fitted together and it is solid and somebody lives inside. God dwells in the temple of Christ, which is the church. So these are different facets of the reality.

So in the same way the baptism with the Holy Spirit is described with a number of terms; two of which I would like to focus on just for a moment and explain a little bit about what they mean because sometimes words change their meaning over time. And when words change their meaning over time it can lead to confusion. So the word that we translate *to be filled with the spirit* is a word that in the Bible is related to the concept of being brought under the control of something else. It doesn't really have anything to do with taking an empty cup and filling it up. We sing that wonderful song, *Fill My Cup, Lord*. That's fine. There is an image there of spiritual expectation. As long as you realize that's all it is, it's an image that describes our spiritual expectation, it's not a problem. If you think that you're a cup and God is going to come along and take the lid off your head and pour something in then I've got a problem with that. First of all, God doesn't need to put the spirit into your life if you are a Christian. He is already there. That can be confusing. So let's try and elucidate that for a minute.

I want to go back for just a second and talk about the word *baptism* and then come and say a few more things about the word *filled*. We said before baptize is the Greek word for dunk. Right? All those Greek men sitting in donut shops are baptizing their donuts. Right. In the Greek it is *baptizo*, to dunk something. To immerse something in a liquid. This idea of immersing something in a liquid has the connotation of changing the thing that is immersed in the liquid. So when you take your donut and stick it into your coffee it doesn't come out quite as firm as it was before. And if it's day old and it's cheaper and you bought it that way and you want to kind of soften it up you kind of just stick it in there and it comes out a little different, doesn't it. It changes as a result.

It's the same idea as when you dye something. You stick it in the dye and it comes out a different colour. So the idea of baptizing has the idea of transformation involved as well. It means to induce something or introduce something into a new environment and that environment alters its condition in some way. That's the concept of baptism as it applies to the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

So when we are baptized with the Spirit we are brought into a new relationship with the Spirit that is similar to as if we had been immersed in the Spirit in the sense

when you are immersed in the Spirit you are totally surrounded by the Spirit, and the Spirit is influencing you from every possible angle and direction. In other words, he has total control of your life. Do you see the connection between the idea of being brought under the control of something and being baptized? And when you are baptized in the Spirit you are brought into a new all-encompassing relationship with the Spirit who already lives within you where he becomes the comprehensive influence in your life. That's what it means to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Now we distinguish this from water baptism in a very simple way. When you are baptized in water who does the baptizing? It doesn't have to be a minister, by the way. There is nothing in the Bible that says that. In fact, I know one church where they have a revival happening, Brother Bill, because what the pastor says is "you win them to the Lord, you can baptize them!" People say "terrific, I'll actually do it." And it happens. The person doing the baptizing is the pastor or another Christian.

What are you baptized into? Water. You are baptized into Christ when you are saved. You are baptized into water. You go down dry and you come up wet – that's usually what happens. You are the one who is being baptized. When you are baptized in Christ – we talked about this yesterday when you're saved – who does the baptizing? Not Jesus. The Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:13. *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...* The Holy Spirit takes you out of the company of lost humanity when you repent and accept Jesus and he baptizes you or immerses you or places you into the church. That is the baptism by the Spirit where the Spirit does the baptizing and what you are baptized into is the body of Christ.

What we're talking about this morning is a third baptism. In this baptism who is the baptizer? Jesus. *I speak about one who will come after me who is mightier than I.* He shall baptize you into what? Not water. Not the body of Christ but the Holy Spirit. And so in the baptism of the Holy Spirit Jesus immerses us, brings us into a new all-encompassing transformation relationship with the Spirit. The Spirit is the one into which we are baptized. So that's how we make those distinctions and hopefully get them straight in our minds.

The Holy Spirit is the element. Christ is the agent. We are the recipients.

To move on and talk a little bit more about being filled with the Spirit and see the connection, we want to move away from the empty cup model of adding something. I cannot and God will not add any more of the Holy Spirit to your life. Do you know why? When you were saved the Holy Spirit came into your heart. Right? If you don't have the spirit of Christ you are none of his, Paul says, in Romans, chapter 8. In other words every Christian has the Spirit living within him or her. If you don't, you're not a Christian. By definition a Christian has the Spirit living within their life. All that he does and all that he brings into our lives is part and parcel of what makes salvation possible when we are actually saved. So every Christian has the Spirit. But you know what, the Spirit is not a liquid. He's not a gas. He's not a granular substance. He's a person. A person cannot be divided up and received in installments; 10% now and 15% later. When you meet somebody you don't meet their hand and say that I'll meet your eyes later. You meet the whole person. For good or bad you get the whole thing at once. They are a person. You may not know them comprehensively when you first meet them but you are meeting the whole person. When you are saved God puts the third person of the Holy Trinity ---

The third person of the Holy Trinity actually comes to live in your life. Your life has been invaded by God if you're a Christian. And when the Holy Spirit comes, because he is a person, he comes as a whole person. Not only that, because he's a person of the Holy Trinity he brings with him the presence of the Son and the Father because the presence of the Father is in the Spirit and in the Son and vice versa. That's why I can say Jesus is in me even though I'm not inhabited by Christ but I'm inhabited by the Spirit of Christ. But because he's a member of the Godhead even though there are three persons there is one God. When the Spirit comes the Father comes and the Son comes as well in the person of the Spirit. So when I'm saved the Spirit comes into my life. If I'm going to get filled with the Spirit at some point after I've initially been saved then I'm not receiving any more of the Spirit because he's not a commodity. He's a person. I have already received the person of the Spirit.

So this is where we bring in this concept of baptism where I've said that the baptism with the Spirit is a new comprehensive relationship with the Spirit. It's a new

quality of our relationship with him. The word *filled*, as it is used in scripture, is derived from a word in Greek that actually means to be brought under the control of something. We have some idea of what this means when we use the word sometimes this way in our own language. We speak about people who are filled with fear. Luke 5:25 talks about an occasion when the disciples were out in the boat with Jesus and they were filled with fear. All of their thinking was controlled by fear. They said, look, don't you care that we perish? What a thing to say to the Lord. Don't you care that we perish? Nobody in their right mind who knew Jesus Christ would say that to him. They were filled with fear. They were so captivated by fear, they were so controlled by fear that fear controlled all of their actions.

A tragic story is told about two people who were walking about five years ago now just north of Toronto. They were walking, just chatting, I suppose in an afternoon enjoying the outdoors along an old railway track. As they were walking along they didn't notice they had begun to cross a trestle over a little gorge. Suddenly a train started to come. I don't know about you but that's a pretty scary prospect if you are walking and you can't go left or right and a train starts to come. That would strike fear into most people's hearts I would think and of course these people panicked. They totally panicked. One of them jumped off the trestle into the gorge and was injured. The other one unfortunately was killed by the train.

You say well what option did they have? They were filled with fear and they were so filled with fear they were controlled by their fear and they were so controlled by their fear they didn't stop to think. There were two tracks on that trestle. They could have stepped aside and sat down or laid down on the other tracks and they would have been perfectly safe. But they were filled with fear. Their every action was controlled not by wisdom or by rational thought whereby they could have easily delivered themselves from death, but they were controlled by fear. They were filled with fear.

Well, you see to be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. It's not a fearful thing. It's a very positive thing. But the same imagery applies. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. We've all met people who are filled with themselves. Do you know what I mean by that expression? He's filled with himself. All

he can talk about is himself. That's his favourite subject. He or she are their own favourite subject. All you have to do is say hello and everything starts to come out. Right? And then you just become a listener. If you have great listening skills these kind of people are attracted to you, kind of like flies. A person who is filled with themselves is totally taken up by themselves. A person filled with the Spirit is a person who is flowing in the Holy Spirit, a person who is allowing the Holy Spirit to guide their lives to speak to them. And I don't mean in some sort of weird sense where they are getting all these little whisperings in their head or stuff like that. God does speak to us sometimes in unusual ways. I'm not saying that. But I mean a person, among other things, who is walking in obedience to the word of God because guess what, this is his word and he inspired it. This is what he wants. You want to know what the Spirit wants. Oh, I wish the Spirit would just direct me. Fine. Read your Bible. Find out what it says and do it! You've got 90% of it covered right there. And you've also got your hands full just doing that. But many Christians are seeking the special leading of the Spirit for every moment of their lives when they are ignoring all the things the Spirit has already said.

It would be like poor Brother Jim here when you're trying to function here at camp and what you do all day long is ask him what the rule is for everything you think you want to do. Instead you could just read the Rulebook or find out what things are and then you would know all that. You can ask about the exceptions but the norm is all laid down for you. The norm is laid down for us for Spirit-filled living right here.

There is another aspect to it and I don't want to in any way, shape or form convey a legalistic sense that if you know all the rules you are a Spirit-filled person. I don't mean that at all. But I do mean that if you walk in obedience to the commandments God has revealed and that's the will and the flowing of the Spirit and at the same time we do it in communion with the Spirit, we do it in communication with the Spirit, and he is our best friend and he is the one we talk to when we are blessed with his presence and we enjoy his presence because he is actually a person and he can be our very best friend. We fellowship with Jesus through his presence in our lives.

So when we're filled with the Spirit we're brought under his gracious control. We submit ourselves moment by moment to his will. So it's probably more accurate to say

in one sense that when you are filled with the Holy Spirit you do not receive all of him but he receives all of you to control, to accomplish his will, you become an instrument of the Holy Spirit in this world.

Let me just conclude this little segment here, this subsection, by saying how does this differ from being indwelt by the Spirit. When you receive Jesus as Saviour he comes into your life and you receive the power to become a child of God. Okay? As many as received him, John, chapter 1 tells us, to them he gave the power or the authority to become the children of God. When you were baptized in the Spirit you received the empowering to do the work of God. See the difference? The presence of the Spirit in our lives when we're saved makes us God's children. It changes us constitutionally. It changes our eternal relationship with the Father. The empowering of the Holy Spirit equips us to do something for God. It equips us. It doesn't change the basic relationship we have because we already have that relationship with God through salvation.

So the first is called the new birth when we're made new creatures in Christ and the Holy Spirit comes for the first time to live in our lives. The second is the anointing for service. This anointing causes a river to begin to flow. Jesus says that out of your innermost being – notice it's not flowing in, it's flowing out because it's already there, the Holy Spirit is already there and the power of God is already in your life, the power by which God made the entire universe lives in your life. All God has to do is help you to figure out a way to turn on the tap. When you turn on the tap what I have called and the Lord really spoke to me about that title, the Lifestream, the flowing of God's life that is already within you is going to start to happen in a powerful way. And when God's life begins to flow out of you, people are saved and people are healed and people are convicted and people are blessed and needs are met and things happen that wouldn't normally happen because something other than just you is involved. The Spirit of God is flowing out of your life in a powerful way and God is able to use you very powerfully.

Okay. Let's talk about the pattern of events very quickly in the book of Acts. It suggests that normally, or in many cases, people are first saved and we know at that time they are indwelt by the Spirit. Then they are baptized often in water and then in

many cases they were baptized with the Holy Spirit to empower them for ministry. In Acts, chapter 8, we read the story of the great revival in Samaria where Philip went, performed signs and wonders in the name of the Lord and many were baptized in water. I find it hard to understand how they couldn't be saved if Philip thought they should be baptized in water. Obviously in his mind they were saved and they were baptized in water to proclaim publicly their identification with Christ in salvation. This occurs in Samaria. And then the apostles show up and they lay hands on them and they are filled with the Spirit. As far as we can tell from the secondary evidence they probably spoke with other tongues.

So this is often the case. It doesn't always have to be this way. It doesn't always have to be the case that people are first saved, then baptized in water and then baptized in the Spirit. It has been known to occur that people are baptized in the Spirit coming out of the waters of baptism, kind of a two-in-one sort of thing. That's wonderful. That's great. Some people have been baptized in the Holy Spirit before they have been baptized in water. That has happened as well. Some people are baptized in the Spirit the moment they are saved. That has been known to happen as well. In fact my buddy, Ron Garrison, a school mate of mine in Bible School, has been used tremendously of God preaching in Eastern Europe. He says it is amazing. I don't have to tell these people about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. They are so hungry for God when I preach salvation they get saved and filled on the spot. While I'm still preaching sometimes they are getting saved and filled with the Spirit in my meetings. He's not even preaching in their language. He's using an interpreter. God is using him tremendously. When there is a tremendous hunger for God it's amazing what can happen, even in the absence sometimes of a great deal of knowledge.

Unfortunately in some cases those of us who have been for years in Pentecostal churches, especially those who have been in Pentecostal churches and not received their baptism, in many ways it is much harder for them because they have been convinced there is a certain protocol to follow and they have been convinced that probably they are not really a candidate and they are a chronic seeker and why didn't God fill me the last fifteen times I came to the altar. This sort of mentality sets in as



opposed to just straight simple hunger for what God has for them. It complicates the issues sometimes. That's one of the reasons why I find teaching helps those folk because many times they have been operating on a lack of understanding of what it is they're seeking. They are seeking the wrong thing.

Okay. That's something about the sequence of events. Cornelius and his household is an example of salvation and baptism with the Holy Spirit happening simultaneously. This has happened, as I say, it happens today and it happened in history. What happened there was Peter is called to preach and as he is speaking the words, verse 44 of Acts 10 says the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message and the circumcised of the Jewish believers who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also for they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Peter said hey, why can't we baptize them? Obviously God is not worried about them being Gentiles. He just saved them and filled them with the Spirit, just like us. If you look at the account what happens is he baptizes them and Peter goes back to Jerusalem. You've got to remember that most of the early Christians at the very beginning were strict Jews and strict Jews hated Gentiles. They would have nothing to do with Gentiles. A strict righteous Jew would not even walk into a Gentile person's house, let alone take a drink of water from a vessel they had handled. So in the light of this we see how radical Jesus was in talking to the Samaritan woman, but Jesus was a radical guy anyway.

In the early church in the very beginning they had a hang-up about this and so Peter goes, the Spirit he says told me to go. You know the story of the sheet let down from heaven and God says what I have cleansed don't call unclean. God had to say it three times but fortunately it finally sunk in – Peter was a fairly thick chap, you know, so there's hope for everybody, the kind of guy who opened his mouth to change feet and that sort of thing. Not a problem. God used him tremendously regardless. And Peter went to a Gentile home, did what his conscience told him as a strict religious Jew was probably wrong and preached the gospel to these hungry people and God baptized them in the Spirit. And Peter says wow, God doesn't care. I tell you that's good for you

and me, folks. Because as a result of that the church began to realize the gospel was for everybody. Hallelujah, Jew and Gentile alike. It didn't matter. People didn't have to become Jewish and be circumcised and accept the Law and keep all that legalistic stuff and then get saved by grace. What a waste. Get yourself all bound up just so you can get loosed and be free, you know. It's crazy. It's like getting a divorce so you can get married. It's backwards. You don't need to go through all that legalistic stage of things because God has surpassed that. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and because of Calvary all you need to do is repent and accept him as your Saviour and you have a relationship with God that is far better than what the old covenant would ever give you because it is God's complete plan fulfilled in the coming of his wonderful Son and all that he has done for us.

So these people are filled with the Spirit. Peter says in verse 47, surely no one can refuse water for these to be baptized who have just received the Spirit, just as we did, can we? He said these guys have had a Pentecost just as we did. They have had a Day of Pentecost so he baptizes them. He gets back to Jerusalem and they call him on the carpet. Peter, what are you doing preaching to Gentiles? What are you doing going into those filthy Gentile homes? What are you doing baptizing Gentiles, Peter? Are you nuts? They weren't Jewish. They hadn't received the Law and the circumcision and so forth. So Peter tells the story in chapter 11 and he reports what God has done. In verse 12 he says the Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. You see the early Christians hadn't fully got their theology together. It takes the church a while to get her theology together and line it up with her experience. It took the church three hundred years to finally clearly define and figure out that the Godhead is made up of three persons and one God and that the Father is God but he's not the same person as the Son, and yet the Son is God even though he's not the same person as the Father or the Spirit, and that the Spirit is also God, even though he's not the same person as the Father and the Son. It took the church three hundred years to find adequate language and to come to some agreement on what the scripture was saying all the time. But you know what, she was impelled to do that because the church and all those wonderful Jewish believers were believers in one God, all of a sudden had a problem because they said, wait a minute, wait a minute, we've got a problem here.

We believe in one God but we know Jesus is God. But we look at the Holy Spirit and he must be God, too. How do we reconcile the fact that we know Jesus is God because only God is the Saviour the scripture says and Jesus is the Saviour, but we worship the one God, the Father, and God disciplined our people hundreds of years ago for worshipping other gods, how are we going to figure all this out. But they knew Jesus was God by their experience of him so over time it takes the church time to get her theology together. That's okay. That's okay.

So they were getting their theology together here and Peter says the Lord directed me to go. These brothers, God sent them with me. They are my witnesses and we went to this man's house. Verse 13. He reported to us how he had seen an angel standing in his house saying send to Joppa and have Simon, who is called Peter, brought here and he shall speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household. And as I began to speak the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as he did upon us at the beginning. Notice the connection with Pentecost. And I remembered the word of the Lord how he used to say John baptized with water but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Peter said these guys got baptized in the Spirit and he knew because they spoke in tongues.

If God therefore gave to them the same gift as he gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus, who was I that I could stand in God's way. And praise God, this next verse is exciting. When they heard this they quieted down and glorified God saying, well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life. Thank God he was able to correct their theology because they were learning and God was helping them and they were growing. This is an amazing story. When you think about this angel, I know sometimes I've read this sort of thing and thought it was wonderful. I wonder if that ever still happens today.

Do you know that it does? Do you know right now today as I speak God is reaching the hearts of Muslim people all over the world because the church has not done it? One of the largest unreached blocks of people in the world – there's actually two; the major one is the Chinese people and despite the wonderful things that God has done there's at least five hundred million Chinese people in distant provinces, in ethnic

tribes and groups that live within China that are unreached by the gospel. That's a lot of folks. But the Muslim block of nations in the so-called ten-forty window represent about eight hundred million people. They are the most resistant people on the earth to the gospel. But you know what. God is so great because all he needs is a hungry heart. He doesn't need anything else. Sometimes he doesn't even need a missionary. In the nation of Iran which is one of the most strict negative fundamental Islamic nations in the world, you would be lucky if you could find five hundred Christians up until very recently. Not that long ago, a year and a half ago, an Assemblies of God pastor was put to death by the government for serving the Lord and preaching the gospel in that nation which has tried to destroy any vestige of Christianity or any other belief other than strict Islam. But you know today reports are coming to us there are over ten thousand believers in Iran? Do you know that over half of them have had a personal vision of Jesus Christ who has come to them because their hearts are hungry? This is being repeated in other Islamic countries which are closed to the gospel and every effort is made to keep the gospel out. But you know what, when you're dealing with God it doesn't work! You can't keep God out. All he needs is a hungry heart in one way or other, by hook or by crook, by missionary or by angel or by Bible or by tract or by a radio broadcast or by satellite broadcast, in any way, shape or form, he's going to reach that person and they're going to get saved.

This is what happened to Cornelius and it has been happening and it is happening today if the reports I read are accurate in unprecedented numbers. Hallelujah. I wouldn't be surprised Brother Bill if some of the folk you have ministered to in the Arctic at some point there has been a reaching out to the Great Spirit, I guess they would call it in their hearts. And guess what, these guys get off a plane and start teaching them how to say hallelujah and Oh boy...! Amen. Praise God.

So God is still doing those things today. He's coming to hungry hearts. He's meeting those hungry hearts wherever they may be.

So there are different sequences of events in receiving the baptism. Don't get hung up on that.

Finally, to conclude our teaching this morning, I want to just discuss very briefly the secondary benefits of receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit. We have testified to and are aware of the value and blessing of a deeper prayer life that often follows this, a more meaningful, more exuberant, more joyful worship style. People have realized now that Pentecostal worship is not some sort of a weird sociological phenomenon of economically and educationally deprived individuals who are finding psychological compensation in their emotional releases. Okay. That's how some historians used to look at it. Then suddenly they woke up and said now wait a minute. Hold on guys. There's four hundred million people like this around the world. They couldn't all be that bad. They couldn't all be that sick in the head. Maybe we have to revise something. And also the missiologists, starting with Peter Wagner and others, woke up to the fact that among Pentecostal people there is incredible church growth all over the world consistently, even in places where other missionaries, godly people, committed people, have laboured and laboured and laboured for years and had two converts. Pentecostals go in and there's a tremendous revival. That's not to say glory be to us. It's simply to say maybe the Bible is right when Jesus said you need this, folks, to fulfill the great Commission. It's part of your equipment. When you go in with that empowering of the Holy Spirit and people find Christ we find this incredible joy, rejoicing and exuberance that just comes out of them. There are many places in the world where culturally speaking you will never turn them into dead dry Christians because they just ain't that kind of folk. They love to dance and sing and rejoice whether it's in the Spirit or whether it's to Jesus. That's just in them. So when they find the Lord they fit right in beautifully to Pentecostal worship. In fact, they teach us a few things about it.

I can remember sitting in an Anglican church where we had the privilege of worshipping, a wonderful church, a godly church, a place where the gospel was preached. Wonderful people in that church. One of the people who attends that church is a lady who has been a missionary. She has worked for ten years in our Missions Office looking after all the details for the missionaries; shipping their stuff over and helping them buy their fridges and things they need in other countries and dealing with different currencies and medical insurance and all this complicated stuff in forty or fifty countries of the world. She goes to that church. She's a wonderful lady. She loves the

Lord. We were in that church one Sunday and they had a guest preacher. This guest preacher was an Anglican bishop from Uganda. But I'll tell you something, he sounded more like a Pentecostal than I do! He was teaching the folk how to say amen during his sermon. He had a little lesson on how to say amen at the appropriate times to punctuate his message with that. I got the impression hearing his message that his church is a pretty Pentecostal church even though it says Anglican over the door. You go outside North America and my understanding from all the reports and all the people I've talked to, is by and large it doesn't matter so much what is over the door because God is working in the fullness of his Spirit.

Eighty-eight percent of the born again believers in Brazil are Pentecostals. That church has grown one thousand percent in the last twenty years. It's increased ten-fold and eighty-eight percent of them are Holy Ghost believers. They may not have Pentecostal in their name but they sure have it in their hearts because God's Spirit has been given to us to do the job that can be done in no other way of telling the tremendous story of God's mercy and God's love for every single solitary person. Isn't it wonderful? There's nobody excluded. God is the most politically correct person in the universe, despite what people think about his understanding of some things in the scriptures. He's the most politically correct person in the universe. He's the most inclusive being there is because he does not want anybody to be left out but every nation, tribe, tongue, people, family to be represented in that great throng that will gather around the throne.

Help in overcoming sin, greater capacity to exercise spiritual gifts, the gifts of the Spirit, all of these things are blessing that come. But they are the blessings that are kind of on the side, you know. It's great to have a wonderful meal with steak and potatoes and it's nice to kind of throw in a few olives and a few other things. But if somebody served you up a big plate of olives – my daughter would love it because she loves olives – but most of us would say don't you have a little steak or a little bit of potato to go with that? It's kind of like the main course is missing. We made the mistake sometimes of thinking the baptism with the Holy Spirit was all about all the peripheral things, all the other blessings, the exuberant worship and the prayer life and

the prayer language and the supernatural gifts and all these other things. But what it is really about is Acts 4:31. It's kind of interesting that Brother Cameron referred to this very scripture this morning because I conclude with it. They had experienced persecution and they prayed a wonderful prayer. Most of the prayer was not Oh God help us, they don't like us, most of the prayer was Oh God, you're incredible. You made the whole world. We know this is no problem. We leave it in your hands. Take care of it. The thing we're worried about most is that we'll get scared and not preach like we should, so don't let us do that. That was the content of their prayer when they were being persecuted and threatened.

When they had prayed the place where they gathered was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began...

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I don't have to be afraid of anything in this life because I know whether I live or whether I die I belong to the Lord. Amen? What is there left to fear when God says I'm with you. You hear stories of people who are threatened with persecution and sometimes the Lord shows up in an angelic fashion. I'm told that in some cases angels, who are about four times as high as ordinary folks, and when you're threatening someone and all of a sudden an angel is standing behind them, you know, you sort of back off just a little bit. What is there to be afraid of when the God of the universe has said I'm always going to be standing behind you? So when someone tries to threaten you and someone tries to overcome you, you know that ultimately, even if they were to take your life, you are still going to win. In fact you are going to win even bigger in that sense because when the blood of the martyrs is spilled, Tertullian said that it is the seed of the church. Only rarely have persecuting nations woken up to the fact that the best way to make Christianity die is to treat the Christians in the best way possible, to pamper them and to just allow them to do whatever they want to do, that is unless they are on fire for God and they'll just kind of fall asleep. But if you step on them, if you stomp on them, if you kick them, close their churches, imprison their pastors, kill a few of them, persecute them, the thing spreads like wildfire. There's a city in China that was a model city. The Chinese government said we will stamp out Christianity in this city.

Today according to official Chinese Government statistics there are more Christians in that city than in any other city in all of China. Hallelujah! That's the amazing thing about the church. You try to stamp it out and it grows. (Applause) It grows because God has got soldiers who can be fearless when they are filled with the Holy Spirit. Whether we live or whether we die, it's like a whole bunch of kamikazes for Jesus. They're not afraid of death and they know if they invest their lives in death and God allows their lives to be taken its God's will and he'll fit them into his plan and he'll multiply the church as a result, so away they go. How do you stop people like that? You don't.

I'm so glad that you don't because God loves the world and he loves all of our dear Muslim friends. We have Muslim friends now in Canada. How many have a Muslim friend? Maybe we have more of this in the south because they're moving into the cities. But you will find more and more. I have seen on TV reports and things, noticed them in other communities in Ontario that are not big cities of the south, you see folk who are Vietnamese and Chinese and Muslims. The world has come to us and we have this wonderful opportunity to love these folk who are not in an environment whereby everything in their culture reinforced their religion. There can be a greater openness to the gospel. And do you know some of them are here to win us? They send missionaries to these countries. They are sending missionaries and building mosques all over Africa. There are many places where they are using every tactic; honest, dishonest, fair, coercive, manipulative they possibly can to take over the government, to take over the educational institutions and impose Islamic law and force everyone to be a Muslim. That is part of the agenda in many cases. There are even those who have come here and they are Muslim missionaries. Well, we need to help them to realize that this wonderful land which they have wanted to come to is a wonderful land because we have served the Lord Jesus Christ in the past. We're not going to be able to live on that hangover of a Christian heritage much longer. We see the deterioration in our government and so on as a result of rejecting God's ways. But God has called upon us to allow the Holy Spirit to empower us so that we can share with our Muslim friends and our Chinese friends and all of these others who have come from around the world.



God is so good, isn't he? You know they changed the national anthem to make it missionary. Did you know that? They changed the national anthem in Canada about fifteen years ago. What does it say now? From far and wide, O Canada. And then it says God keep our land. Far and wide. God has brought the people to us. That's the missionary verse in the national anthem. God has brought them to us from far and wide. We don't even have to go far and wide. He's brought them to us. He's given them to us so we can say they need to learn about Jesus. You need to find him as your Saviour. This is a great country. It's a wonderful country. It's a wonderful country because of what God has done in the past in this nation and because of what God wants to do in your life.

--- Closing prayer. Lord, we're excited. You're doing things to reach people with the gospel in unprecedented numbers. All over the world the Holy Spirit is moving in an unbelievable way and people are finding Christ. Lord, our job is to allow you to help us, to allow you to empower us that we may be the witnesses you want us to be, not just with our words because if it's just with our words we had better shut up. But with our lives first, transformed lives, lives full of integrity and honesty and purity and truth and joy and rejoicing and love and mercy and compassion, those kinds of lives that can speak the name of Jesus and that can share with folk this good news, because God, it's good news that you would become our Saviour, that you would send your only Son to die for us. There isn't better news anywhere. Hallelujah. And that he would come into our lives bringing forgiveness and healing and blessing and joy and provision. There's no better news. But we have to tell it. We have to explain it. We have to live it. We have to share it. Help us Lord in these days as we prepare our hearts. For those who have not been filled with the Spirit I pray these next three days would be a time of seeking God, a time of prayer, a time of developing spiritual thirst before the Lord, a time of preparation for when opportunity will be given on Friday morning. And Lord that we wouldn't have to struggle because it's a gift. We don't struggle for a gift. We just receive it. We just say, thank you Lord. If your son asks you for a loaf of bread will you give him a stone? Of course not. Don't you think the Father is better than you? Don't you think he won't give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? Yes, you will, Lord. As we prepare our hearts let that be our prayer of confession, let that be our joy and our

hope that you will give your gifts freely to your children so that we can do what you called us to do. And help those of us who are filled with the spirit to stir up the gift, O God, that is within us, to stir it up, O God, so that it would fulfill its purpose of not just allowing us to be blessed in a Pentecostal meeting, but rather to allow us to be blessed by seeing our neighbours and our friends and our family come to Jesus. Help us, Lord, help us, Lord. Thank you, Jesus. Lord we just ask for your blessing now as we dismiss. Let your hand rest upon each one for the rest of this day and for the rest of our time together in this camp.